



2010 Emerging Business of the Year

The Next Step, Inc. / WOTC Solutions, LLC

Owners	John L. White
Nature of Business	Nationwide employment services/WOTC placement
City	Lenexa
County	Johnson
Phone	913-894-2601
Web Site	https://thenextstep99.com/index.php
Business Structure	LLC
Business Began	TNS in 2001 and WOTC in 2009
Employees	7-10
KSBDC Consultant	John Addressi



"I found my KSBDC consultant to be professional, involved, knowledgeable and creative in suggesting various strategies for maximizing the potential and execution of my business model."

– John L. White, Owner



Adam White works as Director of Business Development for The Next Step/ WOTC Solutions, Inc.

**Johnson County
Community College
Kansas Small Business
Development Center**

Regnier Center, Room 240
12345 College Blvd.
Overland Park, Kansas 66210-1299

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Business models often address a particular "pain point" they solve with their technology or knowledge. The Next Step, Inc. / WOTC Solutions, LLC solves several pain points at once: soaring criminal recidivism rates, small business labor costs and the ongoing struggles in finding employment in a tough job market..

The Next Step/WOTC Solutions' proprietary database technology matches job seekers with "WOTC-friendly employers" who have utilized the Work Opportunity Tax credit, a federal program which encourages employers to hire disadvantaged workers. Owner John White notes, however, that "employers who do hire WOTC-eligible employees often need professional help in collecting the WOTC. There are numerous pitfalls in obtaining the credit and the percentage of qualifying employers who actually obtain it is very small nationally."

Secret to Success

"Persistence, patience and the somewhat related quality of flexibility have gotten us to where we are."

The Next Step/WOTC Solutions facilitates this tax credit collection process, significantly lowering payroll expenses — e.g., an \$8 per hour entry-level worker only costs the employer around \$5 per hour. The risk to the employer is negligible as The Next Step only gets paid if the employer actually receives the tax credit. Employers often find their new hires are excellent workers, proving themselves worthy of the second chance.

The result is truly a win-win for all concerned: Traditionally hard-to-hire workers are given improved chances of finding jobs, the employers reap significant savings in labor costs and the colleges and corrections systems experience better hire rates for their students and releasees. Getting the word out to the 92% of employers that don't yet utilize the WOTC program is a daunting task, however. John adds, "Persuading the potential consumers of this product to spend the time analyzing its usefulness in the operation of their own businesses is the key challenge. Webinars, ongoing product and processes refinement and constant marketing are how we overcome these challenges." Thus, John's advice for others starting a business: "Plan your marketing and change it when it isn't working."

The future looks bright for The Next Step. John and his team work diligently to educate employers about how the program can include employment of service-disabled veterans, recipients of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, vocational rehabilitation referrals, Katrina survivors and several other covered categories. John maintains that the best part of being an entrepreneur is that "the future is in your own hands." And, perhaps best of all, the workers who find jobs through The Next Step's efforts have prospects for a genuinely better future.